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SOMALIA: FOCAL POINT OF A REVAMPED U.S. REGIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA

by

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Defense Intelligence Agency

A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

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ABSTRACT

SOMALIA: FOCAL POINT OF A REVAMPED REGIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA by Mr. Charles L. Perkins, DIA, 34 pages.

This paper asserts that the United States' humanitarian intervention in Somalia could provide a rare window of opportunity for improving America's strategic posture in Southwest Asia. United States Central Command's area of responsibility is largely deficient in the operational support facilities available to the other regional unified commands. Such facilities would help optimize the sustainability and responsiveness of USCENTCOM's war-fighting forces.

It calls for forward basing small-scale United States forces in Somalia to provide USCENTCOM the redundancy and flexibility to respond with a wide spectrum of war-fighting packages which would be suitable to adequately and decisively accomplish its regional security strategy--with less costly consequences. "Peacemaking" operations, using U.S. special operations forces, are also discussed along with the effect our presence will have on Somalia and other Arab states.

Finally, the paper examines a recent news article about the exploration for potentially significant quantities of oil and gas in northern Somalia.

In sum, the United States could be acting contrary to its own best interest by hastily withdrawing all its troops from Somalia.

SOMALIA: FOCAL POINT OF A REVAMPED U.S. REGIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA

> Access to facilities in Somalia continues to be a part of USCENTCOM's regional strategy. Maintaining a U.S. military presence in Somalia and continuing our military relationship, even if security assistance is confined to non-lethal items, allows us to maintain valuable contacts, counterbalances the growing relationship between Somalia and Libya, and helps Somalia maintain its political and territorial integrity.[1]
>
> Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, US Army (Ret.)

Somalia should play a pivotal role in America's efforts to achieve its regional security strategy in Southwest Asia. With assistance from the United States military, it could become the catalyst for broadening our regional influence and building a lasting peace in the region.

Support for this hypothesis comes from the analysis of two momentous events which, in retrospect, were signs that the United States must pursue forward-looking policies that enhance its ability to project forces into the region. The first event was the extraordinary buildup of American and coalition forces for Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm in August 1990-February 1991. The second involved using United States troops to spearhead the ongoing international humanitarian relief effort in Somalia (Operation Restore Hope), that began in December 1992 with the support of up to 22 member states from the United Nations (U.N.).

Rethinking our policy for Southwest Asia, in general, and Somalia, in particular, is the essence of this paper. Because of

the sudden and dramatic changes that have occurred worldwide in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, the United States has had to prepare for a wide range of regional contingencies rather than focus on its traditional global orientation. Our policy must reflect fiscal realities and dwindling resources, hence we are now in a quandary to decide how best to respond to crises that threaten our interests. Whether to continue the traditional approach of forward stationing permanent forces overseas, or rely primarily on contingency forces located in America, or some semblance of both.

Without question, the American public is in no mood to support basing large forces on foreign soil because of our present budget constraints. Therefore, sensible alternatives such as using a small-scale Western military presence at several strategic locations must be considered to assure that the kinds of military successes we have become accustomed to over the past three years continue.

With Somalia as a focal point of a regional security strategy, the United States would be able to effect changes to the political landscape which would help it to achieve its long-term interests in the region. Prospects for this development, however, hinges in large measure on our actions to restore a legitimate friendly government in Somalia which would, in turn, allow U.S. military forces long-term access to certain Somali airbases, ports, and military support facilities.

Contrary to recent allegations concerning our strategic interest in exploring for oil in Somalia, the United States' prime

motive for sending troops into a country beset with civil unrest was to provide a secure environment for the transportation and distribution of food and medical supplies to starving Somalis. The ease with which other nations were able to coalesce around the U.S.-led operation can be attributed mainly to American political leadership and the widespread respect commanded by our armed forces. Within the first few months, for example, warlords from the two major clans began the reconciliation process and have agreed to a cease-fire.

President George Bush's decision on 4 December 1992 to send a large contingent of troops (up to peak strength of 28,000) to Somalia could underscore the dramatic changes we must make in our policy toward this region. United Nations multinational peacekeeping forces have meanwhile begun to gradually replace United States' forces unit-by-unit under a combined U.S-U.N. takeover plan.

Many American officials had grappled over how long U.S. forces should stay in Somalia, including President Bill Clinton who concluded that they must accomplish their mission and withdraw as soon as possible. Most likely the bulk of American forces under the command of Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnson, U.S. Marine Corps, will be withdrawn some time in 1993 and the reins of the operation handed over to U.N. peacekeeping forces under Turkish General Cevik Bir.

As America opts to relinquish its opportunity to forward-base troops in Somalia, it could be acting contrary to its own best

interest, by leaving a country that might eventually be instrumental in attaining our national security objectives in the region. Giving aid and comfort to the poor and starving citizens of Somalia could eventually turn out to be beneficial for America, Somalia, and the region as a whole, if while carrying out the operation, we support nascent development of its government, restore its citizens' confidence, and enhance its military support infrastructure. Nothing will more profoundly impact future U.S. military operations in Southwest Asia than to have the capability to marshall contingency forces at a regional facility where they would be available to readily respond to a crisis on very short notice.

The absence of continuous Cold War confrontations allows the United States an excellent *opportunity* to freely develop an effective policy focused on Somalia and other regional issues. As the sole world superpower, America must take the lead. It must be more assertive in promoting civil freedom and democracies, while aggressively pursuing its energy interests. An intense effort to allay suspicions that it has de facto colonialist aspirations in mind should be quickly dispelled. Over the next few months, our defense planners should consider establishing formal agreements with an interim Somali government to ensure that long-term plans for naval, ground, and airbase access privileges exist for the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM); the unified command assigned primary responsibility for the region.

How receptive will neighboring Middle Eastern states be toward

a stronger U.S. posture in Somalia? Prospects are very good that the countries of Southwest Asia, with their fragile peace and complex problems involving social, economic, religious, and political upheaval, would collectively welcome a stronger U.S. presence in a "politically neutral" country; particularly, if the United States takes the lead politically and honors its commitments to deal in fairness and in good faith on both sides of the Arab-Israeli dialogue.

What should Washington be doing? Can Somalia be used to define a regional security policy that protects and advances United States interests? What follows attempts to provide the answers.

WHY SOMALIA?

The relationship between Somalia and The United States hinges on a dynamic set of factors. First and paramount is the ongoing humanitarian relief effort in the Somali frontier where American forces are engaged in an unprecedented situation. Allegations of a potential oil discovery in Somalia in a recent *Los Angeles Times* article takes into account another factor which could later prove to be advantageous to the United States, *if* oil is actually there in commercial quantities. However, the political and military factors--just as intriguing--seem to have escaped the vision of American policymakers, and these deserve to be explored. What is at stake here is the crafting of a regional security policy that would safeguard American interests for the foreseeable future.

As a nearly absolute bankrupt country on the periphery of Southwest Asia, Somalia is largely made up of tribal clans loosely

by language and religion (Islam) homogeneity. In January 1991, President Mohammed Siad Barre's government was overthrown and immediately followed by an internal power struggle which left the country in anarchy. Even though the nation has been demoralized and splintered by warring factions, restoring health to its nascent government is not impractical. Order can rise from the ashes of chaos, if modest levels of private capital are prudently applied to infrastructural and internal development, under the auspices and guidance of the UN or its surrogate member representative.

Private investments by foreign oil corporations have been underway there as early as the 1960s. Since most investors are driven by the opportunity to maximize their profits, only disorder and a warring environment must be overcome in order to rejuvenate their interests. Conoco, for example, continued to be directly involved in the Somali humanitarian relief effort, as we shall see in the oil-factor section of this paper. It will not be possible to improve Somalia's economy, infrastructure, and societal development until peace and stability are established in this country. America's military role in stemming Somalia's deteriorating slide can not be overemphasized.

Historically, the United States foreign policy in the Middle East has been erratic and reactive, due largely to continuous Cold War competition with our former adversary (the Soviet Union) and unpredictable worldwide occurrences of exigent situations, which have often developed with very little warning and consistent regularity. To implement its Middle East regional security policy

during a contingency, the United States intended to deploy substantial air and ground forces capable of operating independently out of staging facilities provided by a friendly host nation. Access arrangements with several littoral countries for contingency bases constituted a major part of this strategy. Having access to these bases would have enabled the United States to counter the expansion of Soviet influence in the region, as exemplified by Soviet efforts to acquire basing and overflight rights from Somalia and other littoral countries for their own strategic projection forces.

While American citizens persevered through an energy crisis created by the Arab oil embargo in 1973, the Soviets were making significant progress in gaining a foothold in Somalia. Later when Somalia invaded Ethiopia over territorial disputes in 1977, the Soviets decided to switch sides and support Ethiopia instead. A year later, Ethiopia defeated Somalia in the Ogaden War. Soviet interference, along with multiple instances of Communist meddling in Moslem affairs, seemed to have only produced negative results. For example, the Soviets had a part in the border clashes between North and South Yemen in 1979, invaded Afghanistan later that same year to set up a pro-Soviet Marxist government, and stimulated rivalry between Iran and other Arab states. As a result, Soviet attempts to expand their influence have only aggravated and aroused Arab feelings of anger, insecurity, and distrust--further exacerbating the instability so endemic to the region.

Beginning with the FY 1982 Department of Defense (DoD) Annual

Report--the last such yearly report from the Carter administration--Southwest Asia became consistently referred to as the geographic focus for the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force,[2] which later became USCENTCOM on 1 January 1983.

USCENTCOM is charged with implementing United States military strategy within the most volatile region of the world--a defined area of responsibility (AOR) in Southwest Asia encompassing 19 countries, including the Persian Gulf littoral states, the Red Sea, and the Horn of Africa. Because of the Gulf war, USCENTCOM has been thrust into the limelight, drawing a disproportionate share of world attention. Even with the disappearance of the threat of communist intervention, USCENTCOM faces formidable challenges from several countries within and adjacent to its AOR.

Since USCENTCOM's AOR is situated at the crossroads to the African-Eurasian landmass, its mission is of critical importance to U.S. national security interests for two fundamental reasons. First, and foremost, it must ensure the free flow of oil, since the region holds over 66 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, and other commercial traffic through the region's strategic waterways. In the words of General Schwarzkopf, "as long as oil remains the primary source of energy for the industrial world, USCENTCOM's AOR will remain vital to the security of the U.S., its allies and friends."[8] Second, USCENTCOM is obliged to support United States' friends and allies in an effort to prevent domination by a regional tyrant hostile to our national interests.

In 1983, Somalia was one of 14 countries with which the U.S.

worked out bilateral security assistance programs. But various political problems prevented the United States from reaching formal agreements to use, modernize, or build reliable air and sea facilities at most of the locations.[4] According to one authority, tensions with potential host nations, the Arab-Israeli dispute, fear of ostracism, the sovereignty issue, questions relating to upgrading costs, rental fees, and sharing of the financial burden were major factors that stymied U.S. access to basing in some countries.[5]

Gulf states, as a whole, have been reluctant to publicly acknowledge extending basing privileges to the United States for three reasons: (1) because of the constraints of the superpower rivalry; (2) the perceived backlash from their Arab neighbors for being used as a Western surrogate, or worst, for "conspiring" with a pro-Israel nation; and (3) concerns that Western ideas, customs, and decadence would overshadow Islamic culture too rapidly. Therefore, the United States was forced to rely on "over-the-horizon" maritime operations.

Today, circumstances have so radically improved that the United States is now able to negotiate formal and informal base access arrangements with several littoral countries in Southwest Asia (figure 1). In the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm, the United States signed a 10-year agreement with Kuwait that would allow prepositioning of military supplies and the use of port and air facilities. Apparently, the United States is considering all of the littoral countries in this region, looking for the best

offer available with the least constraints. "We must examine military access agreements that allow us to project forces during pre-crisis situations," said General Carl E. Vuono, U.S. Army (Ret.), "and look at ways to pre-position supplies and equipment and to enhance the support infrastructure in key regions."[6]

On 9 December 1992, the U.S. unilaterally opted to activate its contingency basing arrangement with Somalia and directed its forces to use the naval port and airfield at Mogadishu for a military intervention on humanitarian grounds. As a result, Operation Restore Hope may be remembered as the harbinger of future U.S. military involvement in the post-Cold War era. White House decisions to become militarily involved in a given country will

Figure 1. USCENTCOM Contingency Bases in Southwest Asia

MAP

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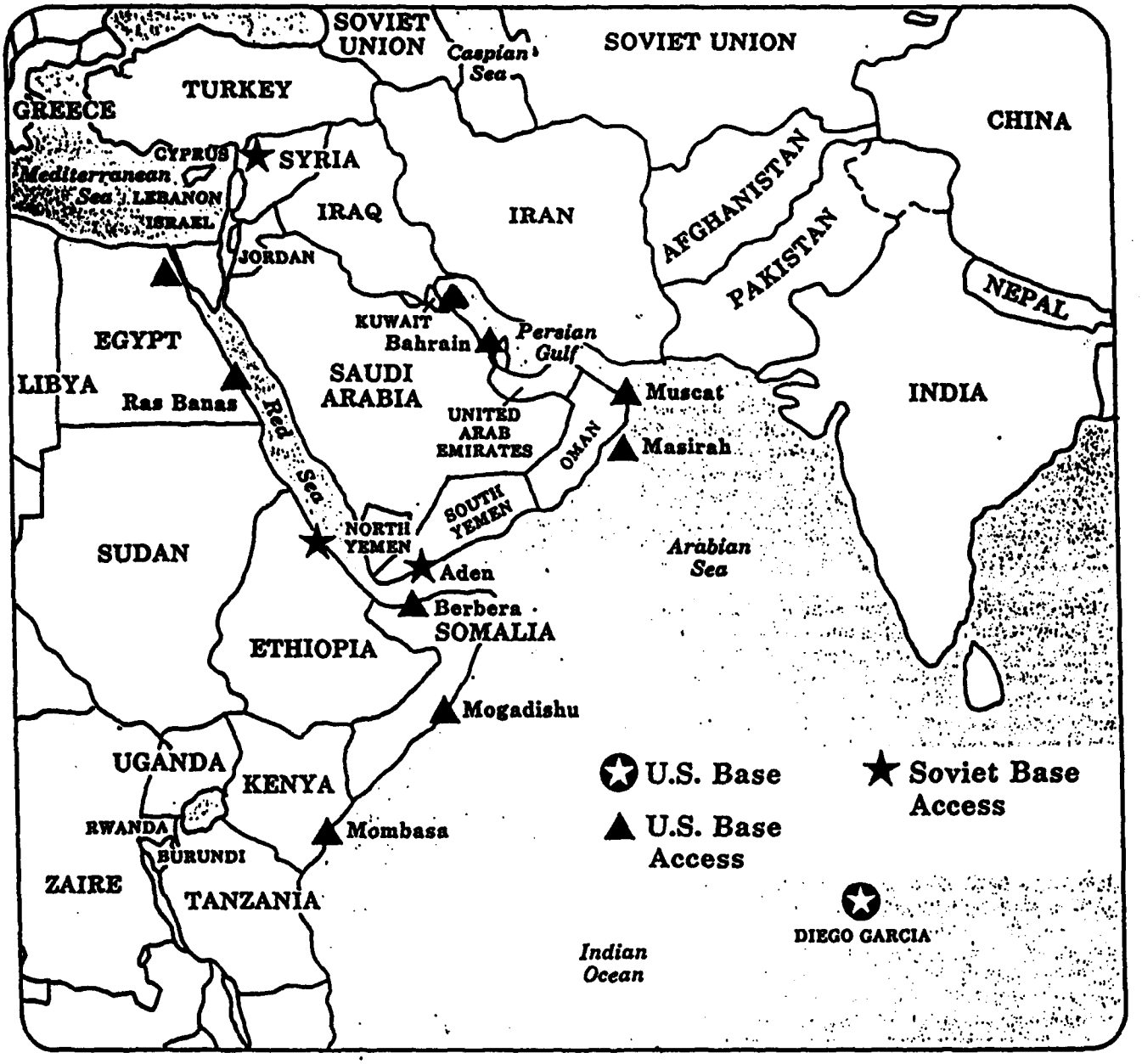
Source: Congressional Quarterly Inc., *The Middle East*, 7th edition, March 1991, p 71.

probably be supported by littoral-oriented deployments by expeditionary forces much like the 18,000 Marines comprising the I Marine Expeditionary Force from Camp Pendleton, California, and elements of the Army's 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, New York, which were both airlifted into the region. The Marines were outfitted with additional equipment, arms, and supplies from five



Note addition of Kuwait to map!

maritime prepositioning ships (MPS) normally based at Diego Garcia, a island in the center of the Indian ocean.

In this instance, maritime operations offered a relatively cost-effective approach to responding to this low-intensity conflict (LIC), especially since USCENTCOM had no permanently based forces in the region. But when the United States must sustain its forces for protracted operations that extend beyond 30 days, particularly in medium- to high-intensity engagements, the risks and costs become enormously greater, even if the war fighting is shared by coalition forces whose individual states voluntarily supply funds and allow access to support facilities.

Given the situation in Somalia and post-Cold War conditions, U.S. defense planners now have an excellent opportunity to nurture the democratic process and initiate plans more congruent with America's long-term interests. The U.S. Army definitely requires access to support areas and facilities that can accommodate prepositioned heavy equipment assets (referred to as prepositioned operational materiels configured to unit sets or POMCUS) as well as logistics, operational, and intelligence support elements.

Land-based facilities to support the Air Force and Navy are also vitally needed to enhance the sustainability of U.S. fighting forces, facilitate timely intelligence, maintain air surveillance requirements, and increase USCENTCOM's command, control, and communications capabilities throughout its area of responsibility (AOR). A permanent location from which USCENTCOM could keep its hands on the throttle of events in its AOR is sorely needed and has

been lacking now for a decade. Somalia could very well satisfy this requirement.

Although some observer might question the use of Somalia as the basis for devising a regional security strategy, the fact that the former Soviet Union had already developed a strategic interest in Somalia (in 1973) ten years before the creation of USCENTCOM--establishing bases there to solidify its presence on the region's periphery[7]--should lend some credence for pondering it. In the past, USCENTCOM also regarded the airbases and naval ports at Berbera and Mogadishu in Somalia as *vital* [emphasis added] to keeping the Red Sea open and for resupplying naval forces in the Arabian Sea.[8] Under current world conditions, it is doubtful that this view has been abandoned.

Moreover, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf underscored the rationale for developing friendlier US-Somalia relations during testimony before the Senate Appropriation Committee in March 1990 when he was then commander-in-chief (CINC), USCENTCOM. He gave the following strategic outlook on Somalia: "Access to facilities in Somalia continues to be a part of USCENTCOM's regional strategy. Maintaining our military presence in Somalia and continuing our military relationship, even if security assistance is confined to non-lethal items, allows us to maintain valuable contacts, counterbalances the growing relationship between Somalia and Libya, and help Somalia maintain its political and territorial integrity."[9]

General Schwarzkopf's assessment clearly affirmed Somalia's

strategic importance to USCENTCOM in 1990. Its importance today centers on its geostrategic location, which places some of its facilities outside the missile radii of missile-possessing states and others opposite the vital Bab el Mandeb Strait, southern gateway to the Red Sea. Hence it could serve as a regional security "safety net" for this AOR. With a forward base there, USCENTCOM would exhibit a demonstrable presence in the region as well as bolster its readiness to provide a flexible response should circumstances warrant. Additionally, it would be in a position to design and construct the facilities of its own choosing.

Somalia's southernmost areas are likely to be less susceptible to known surface-to-surface missile (SSM) threats. If operations like Desert Storm truly represent the kind of conflicts the U.S. will face in the future, it is imperative that USCENTCOM be authorized use of forward-based operational support facilities at locations relatively safe from such threats. Had Iraqi SCUDs been aimed against coalition forces during the initial weeks of Operation Desert Shield the outcome of that conflict could have been untenable. Ready access to military facilities in Somalia is one option of convenience which should not be hastily refused, especially in light of American difficulties in killing Iraqi mobile SCUD launchers and the casualties resulting from such attacks (despite an adequate anti-missile defense umbrella).

Since the transition to a unipolar world system, America holds the unrivaled position as the only remaining superpower involved in Southwest Asian affairs. How long this will last is only a

matter of speculation. With the collapse of the former Soviet empire, threats to peace and stability in Southwest Asia by regional hegemons now consume the bulk of USCENTCOM's attention, not containing Soviet expansionism.

Since regional conflicts are a major concern to USCENTCOM, its forces must be properly equipped and adaptable to respond to a variety of contingencies on very short notice. Especially in an armor-rich AOR like Southwest Asia, it is incumbent that the CINC stockpiles, at a minimum, air and armor assets at strategic locations to enhance his ability to make the most of preparatory actions prior to an impending conflict.

The CINC's duty is to choose the appropriately tailored joint task forces to deter would-be aggressors, provide a meaningful presence abroad, and respond to regional crises in the event central's forces are called upon to execute the national military strategy.

During peacetime, action within USCENTCOM's AOR takes place on three fronts: presence, combined exercises, and security assistance to ensure that friendly forces are well-prepared and supported in the event of regional hostilities.

FORWARD PRESENCE IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

"Presence," as explained by General Schwarzkopf, "is the visible symbol of America's continued interest in and concern for the region." Schwarzkopf noted that besides military forces, "[h]umanitarian assistance programs, conferences, training programs, and exchanges (in fact, almost anything that reinforces

our desire for a mutually beneficial partnership) constitute presence and are key factors in maintaining close relations with our friends throughout the region."[10] "Forward stationing," as explained by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin L. Powell, "is one element of forward presence and is a key underpinning of U.S. diplomacy."[11] He also emphasizes that our military presence is crucial to ensuring that stability continues in the Middle East.[12]

Effective and *visible* forward presence was the key reason our containment strategy worked in Europe during the Cold War period and is the United States' most viable means to successfully deter and repulse domination by a regional power. Therefore, the inclusion of a plan to use U.S. forward presence in Somalia and Kuwait would be an essential part of our overall regional security strategy for this region.

Unlike the sizeable United States forces stationed with unified commands in Europe and the Pacific, USCENTCOM still has no permanently based forces in its AOR. According to one authoritative source, USCENTCOM lacked the extensive in-place command, control, and communications systems; the extensive host-nation basing arrangements; the extensive logistical infrastructure; and the long-term alliances with other nations in its AOR congruous with the other unified commands in Europe and in the Pacific.[13]

Thus, the purpose in maintaining land-based prepositioned supplies in-theater is to substantially reduce the time required

to muster USCENTCOM's assets and to provide the CINC with a wider range of options to successfully wage a campaign against some threatening regional power. Land-based forward presence also provides a most meaningful demonstration of America's resolve and commitment to support its friends and allies.

Of critical importance is the need for in-theater facilities that enhance regional command and control, airborne warning and control system (AWACS) operations, air and sea power projection, and intelligence support functions. All of these play a significant role, not only in protecting our friends and interests, but also in gathering political, economic, and military intelligence for future contingencies. The latter capability would be especially helpful in understanding Islamic culture and attitudes, and discerning the intentions and mind-set of potential adversaries.

Another critical shortcoming is the absence of a permanent USCENTCOM headquarters within the theater. This last point is especially troubling in light of the fact that the regional unified commander is charged with administering the United States' security assistance programs--a primary instrument for implementing theater strategy--maintaining an effective and visible presence, and countering aggression directed against vital U.S. interests throughout his AOR. Somalia, because of its location at the southern edge of USCENTCOM's AOR, would be a sensible site for this headquarters. Without a headquarters in Southwest Asia, America's commitment to peace and stability in the region will continue to

be questioned.

Correcting these disparities any time soon may be hindered because of anticipated changes in the United States' force structure. In a report on the roles, missions, and functions of the armed forces issued in 1993, General Powell stated, "Our new military strategy, which takes into account the dramatic changes since 1989, reflects the end of the era when large numbers of GIs were permanently stationed on foreign soil. As we continue to implement and refine the strategy, we will substantially but carefully reduce and restructure our forces around the world."[14]

Ostensibly, the dwindling United States defense budget is a major reason for ending the era of basing large forces overseas as referred to by General Powell. The Somali operation alone could end up costing the United States as much as $2 billion.[15] Thus, it is not unrealistic to expect U.S. deployed forces in the post-Cold War period to be much smaller and more mobile. While this is a significant departure from the traditional way the military does its business, it represents a serious challenge for developing new approaches to protecting our interests abroad.

PEACEMAKING OPERATIONS

One approach to protecting our interests in Southwest Asia would be to use United States special operations forces (SOF) to carry out "peacemaking" operations in Somalia. Matching sufficient force for the problem at hand is of critical importance when operating under severe budget constraints. The situation in Somalia is one in which SOF would be especially valuable because

of their size. SOF language skills, temperament, and regional familiarity enable them to play a vital role in an assortment of contingencies ranging from surgical direct action, spearheading the attack in support of conventional forces, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare missions, foreign internal defense, and counter-terrorist operations.

Perhaps their greatest contribution, however, lies in the austere area of providing assistance and training to host nation forces and officials in civil affairs and socioeconomic development. For example, they are skilled in helping to perform myriad tasks like building schoolhouses, training doctors and medical officials in disease prevention and child health care, assisting in host nation's foreign internal defense activities through military-to-military training programs, and coordinating the internal development plans for an overall nation-building program.[16]

The fundamental difference between the emerging role of peacemaking and its complementary function called peacekeeping, is execution. Both are specific types of LIC operations listed in U.S. Army field manual, FM 100-20, which focuses on the forms of warfare conducted at the lowest end of the combat spectrum. They are defined as:

> **Peacekeeping Operations**--Military operations conducted with the consent of the belligerent parties to a conflict, to maintain a negotiated truce and to facilitate diplomatic resolution of a conflict between the belligerents.[17]
>
> **Peacemaking Operations**--A type of peacetime contingency operation intended to establish or restore peace and order through the use of force.[18]

Simply put, the ultimate objective of peacekeeping is to maintain the peace, whereas the other--peacemaking--is to restore peace or bring it into existence through force. By consensus most would agree that peacemaking is synonymous with peace-enforcement. The U.N. prefers to use peace-enforcement because it preempted the more descriptive term peacemaking to mean "diplomatic means to end fighting."[19] Throughout this paper, peacemaking will be used to remain consistent with the above U.S. Army field manual.

Peacekeeping is a term that is largely synonymous with U.N. operations. The "sky-blue helmets/berets" are well-known symbols of U.N. peacekeepers who serve as referees for monitoring belligerent parties along cease-fire lines, without the authority to use their weapons, except in self-defense. This constraint mitigates against the U.N. being taken seriously by hostile rogue gangs in many locations throughout the world and continues to cause many international aid groups and Somalis to be apprehensive about whether U.N. troops will be forceful enough or as well-armed as their U.S. counterparts to make an effective peacekeeping force.

United States forces, on the other hand, take a more proactive and assertive stance on the use of force which generally fosters a greater degree of security and safety. Their activities in Somalia, for example, fall primarily under the rubric peacemaking.

United States Army FM 100-20 provides the fundamental guidance for military operations involving U.S. security assistance to a host country's armed forces seeking support for their internal

defense. It also offers specific details outlining the use of military operations for internal development purposes within a given country which no longer has an effective government. In concert with the manual's principles, SOF soldiers, airmen, and sailors are well suited to perform their respective missions in areas where no permanent United States military forces are stationed. Whether in peacetime or wartime engagements, they are prepared to exercise the essential elements of military strategy in support of United States national policy.

Peacemaking operations, as used in this essay, refers to a full range of measures taken by United States SOF to promote a country's growth through rebuilding its societal institutions--politically, economically, militarily, and socially. Operations of this type basically adhere to the United States Army's foreign internal defense and development strategy but with a fundamental shift in its center of gravity--from suppression of insurgency elements--to that of averting and eliminating lawlessness and anarchy.

The humanitarian work performed by United States forces in Somalia offers an opening for the United States to pursue its military strategy. Peacemaking operations in Somalia might entail the use of SOF to train, organize, and equip an indigenous militia of sufficient size to restore order, disarm warring factions, and help establish vital civic institutions and services. Their mission would include setting up a provisional government and providing advice and guidance to elected officials. One report

provided a fine illustration of how SOF are being used in Somalia. By implication, their efforts could easily be incorporated into an overall effective peacemaking operation.

> Six Army Special Forces teams have slipped quietly into the desert on "defanging missions," collecting intelligence on feuding warlords and waging intense, unpublicized efforts to prevent bloody clashes between warring clans.... The Special Forces teams, whose members have received training in the Somali language and culture, also have found themselves acting as unofficial mediators and negotiators between warring factions. . . . "We are try- to win hearts and minds [of warlord's inner circle] and get information."[20]

Because of the expertise of its team members, SOF will be able to relate much more closely and effectively among a host nation's populace in subtle ways not otherwise possible. For example, these teams could help achieve the following objectives:

1) enable the U.S. to counter hostile propaganda and disinformation,
2) help alleviate problems rising from neglect of some basic or special needs,
3) provide logistical and medical support,
4) improve the operational support infrastructure,
5) nurturing pro-U.S. sentiment at the grass-roots level,
6) provide the necessary liaison and coordination between the theater CINC and the local leadership,
7) provide training of indigenous militia forces,
8) modernize and enlarge vital military facilities,
9) manage the construction of societal institutions,
10) increase telecommunications capabilities,
11) stimulate democratic values, and
12) implement the CINC's military-to-military assistance programs.

All of the above are consistent with our national security aims of promoting peace, stabilizing democracies, encouraging political pluralism, and fostering personal initiatives. They are also integral to our overall regional security interests as outlined by

President Bush in his white paper on national security strategy of the United States. He states:

> A key task for the future will be maintaining regional balances and resolving such disputes before they erupt in military conflict... Our response to need and turmoil must increasingly emphasize the strengthening of democracy, and a long-term investment in the development of human resources and the structures of free markets and free governments. Such measures are an investment in our own security as well as a response to the demands of simple justice.[21]

Somalia is one country where small SOF teams can effectively execute the national security objectives as outlined above and help foster an atmosphere conducive to peace and stability in Southwest Asia. Such efforts would be instrumental in reinforcing Arab confidence in America's resolve and commitment to the region. It would be prudent to consider using peacemaking operations as an adjunct to USCENTCOM's regional security strategy.

America's interests might best be served by investing in Somalia's internal development to reconstruct its government and improve the welfare of its eight million citizens. In the long term, such an investment could result in the most cost-effective and efficient application of U.S. resources pursuant to our national security objectives.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. BASE FORCE

During 1993, President Clinton and Secretary of Defense (Sec Def) Les Aspin will make a final determination on the core aggregation of military war-fighting forces (base force) that the U.S. can safely field during the near term. It will be a carefully

managed blend of highly ready forces engaged in peacetime activities at diverse locations.[22] Aspin has proposed deeper cuts than the previous administration's defense manpower projections to coincide with a much more versatile and lighter mobile force. He said in January 1993, "Instead of tanks, bombers, submarines, and nuclear weapons designed to annihilate the Soviet Union, the United States needs a military that can deploy swiftly to the Middle East, Southwest Asia, North Korea, and other trouble spots around the world."[23]

The size of the base force which the Sec Def has in mind is expected to be smaller, lighter, highly mobile, and flexible enough to perform its war-fighting capabilities over the entire spectrum of conflict and in all regions of the world. He argued that "troops must be trained to fight terrorism and drug trafficking, be able to conduct *peacemaking* and peacekeeping tasks, and be ready to render *humanitarian* assistance [emphasis added]."[24] As things now stand, such a force would most likely be used to counter a wide range of the anticipated regional contingencies of the future. There is little doubt the base force can easily handle a contingency like Operation Restore Hope, if required.

A sizeable lift capability and generous prepositioning of war supplies are the two essential prerequisites implicit in the administration's base force proposal. This assertion is reasonable in light of the massive buildup needed during Operation Desert Shield. Deploying overwhelmingly large forces to terminate mid- and high-intensity conflicts swiftly, with a minimum loss of life,

was the overriding lesson learned from Operation Desert Storm. Since that time, this lesson has permeated the thinking of our defense planners and military commanders. A fine illustration of the way the United States intends to handle the next Desert Shield/Desert Storm-type contingency was given by CINC, USCENTCOM General Joseph Hoar. He stated on 11 March 1992:

> I believe that we could replicate the results of Desert Storm and Desert Shield with the base force if--we have the coalition support and if we move early on ambiguous warning to move assets to the region. Those are preconditions of success with the base force. Clearly if those things weren't in place, even the base force would not be adequate.[25]

General Hoar's two "preconditions" for an effective deployment of the base force deserves closer scrutiny. He points out that future successful operations of this magnitude would require a collective security partnership among the United States, its friends and allies, and swift activation of our airlift and sealift capabilities to massively move assets into the region when our national interests have been threatened. Thus, defense planners must ensure that available funds are earmarked to enhance and expand the United States' strategic mobility capability.

General Hoar probably inferred that adequate operational support infrastructures, airbases, and naval facilities in his AOR would remain accessible to United States armed forces, particularly in times of crises. Naturally, the actual extent of accessibility to military facilities in the region will be predicated on the political circumstances and relations between the United States and

its host-nation. This suggests that the United States should carefully cultivate its dealings with each of the littoral countries to safeguard mutual interests during an emergency. Indeed, an agreement to station a small number of U.S. military forces in Kuwait has been reached. Similar access to bases in Somalia could play an extremely valuable role in sustaining United States forces for protracted or large-scale military engagements.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AOR NATIONS

Apparently, the pendulum of Arab opinion has now swung in favor of the United States' intervention in Somalia. After all, it was for a cause wholeheartedly endorsed by the international community. A U.N. cover has shielded the United States against charges of hegemonism and imperialism, and has made the U.S. role more politically acceptable to regional states.[26] As a general rule, Arab states have attached particular importance to America's military capability to either make its presence felt during a crisis situation (e.g., the United States' maritime presence in the Persian Gulf in 1987) or to intervene militarily (e.g., Operation Desert Storm in 1991). Long-standing respect and admiration by Arab nations for the United States' international peacemaking capability, military power, economic industrial base, humanitarian record, and to some extent, influence over Israel places it is a position to wield power unmatched by any other country.

An even greater impact on Arab opinion has been the demise of the Soviet-bloc and its ideological system. In fact, few Arab states could deal comfortably with the idea of aligning itself

closely with the former Soviet Union since their Islamic faith strictly prohibits Moslems from forming strong bonds with atheists. Conversely, their faith easily accommodates ties with Christians and Jews whom they are obliged, according to the *Koran*, to respect as "People of the Book." These perceptions are shared, at least in part, by most Arab states and appear to undergird Arab acceptance and sometimes espousal of Western democratic ideals. Insofar as both Iran and Iraq remain the region's more persistent hostile powers, it adds even more credibility for pro-Western Arab nations to acquiesce to U.S. troops being permanently stationed in "politically neutral" Somalia--as one means of offsetting them.

With the exception of Vietnam, the lessons of history have repeatedly shown that the United States can be counted on as a trusted and reliable ally. The mere fact that it expended vital resources to aid Somalia has not gone unnoticed by Arab nations in central's AOR. There must be continued demonstrations of U.S. fairness, sensitivity, and goodwill to Arab causes by asserting our power and influence to effectively handle problems of major concern to fellow Arab states. A successful handling of the humanitarian relief effort, elimination of the anarchy in Somalia, and reviving its internal development would significantly buttress America's rhetoric about its evenhandedness in resolving Arab problems. Moreover, it would solidify America's leadership in the region.

THE OIL FACTOR

The other important factor overlooked in consideration of strengthening United States ties with Somalia is the exploration

of its potential petroleum reserves. Four American oil companies--Conoco, Amoco, Chevron, and Phillips--according to documents obtained by the *Los Angeles Times* have made multimillion-dollar investments since 1986 to explore and exploit tens of millions of acres of the Somali countryside for oil and natural gas. These four companies (along with Shell for a brief period) all sought and obtained exploration licenses for sites in northern Somalia from Somali's former pro-U.S. President Barre prior to his overthrow in January 1991 which contributed, inter alia, to Somali's nationwide anarchy.[27]

Times staff writer Mark Fineman reported the potential Somali oil connection in his front page column on 18 January 1993. Thomas E. O'Connor, a professional geologist who works for the World Bank was reported to have supported the findings of the 1991 World Bank-coordinated study which claimed that Somalia and Sudan were at the top of the list of eight prospective African commercial oil producers. He was quoted as saying, "There's no doubt there's oil there. You don't know until you study a lot further just how much is there,... But it has commercial potential...once the Somalis get their act together."[28]

This article also included the findings of a second geologist, Z. R. Beydoun, who works for Marathon Oil in London. He stated that the northern Somali off-shore sites possess "the geological parameters conducive to the generation, expulsion and trapping of significant amounts of oil and gas," cautioning later that, "you cannot say there definitely is oil," but added: "The different

ingredients for generation of oil are there. The question is whether the oil generated there has been trapped or whether it dispersed or evaporated." Moreover, this article goes on to state:

> The [Conoco, Amoco, Chevron, and Phillips oil] companies' interest in Somalia clearly predated the World Bank study. It was grounded in the findings of another, highly successful exploration effort by the Texas-based Hunt Oil Corp. across the Gulf of Aden in the Arabian Peninsula nation of Yemen, where geologists disclosed in the mid-1980s that the estimated 1 billion barrels of Yemeni oil reserves were part of a great underground rift, or valley, that arced into and across northern Somalia. . . .Hunt's Yemeni operation, which is now yielding nearly 200,000 barrels of oil a day, and its implications for the entire region were not lost on then-Vice President George Bush.[29]

As the only major multinational corporation to maintain a functioning office in Mogadishu before the start of the Somali civil war and up until the present, Conoco, Inc. suspended its oil operations but elected to stay in Mogadishu, reportedly to protect its assets.[30] It has been directly involved, according to the *Times*, in the United States government's humanitarian effort in Somalia. The remaining three oil companies were reportedly forced by the war to abandon their exploration efforts and will probably return once peace is assured. Additionally, just a few days before the 9 December landing of the Marines on Mogadishu's beaches, Conoco turned over the use of its Mogadishu corporate compound to Bush's special envoy, Robert B. Oakley, to serve as the temporary American embassy residence. Further corroboration of the *Times'* disclosure has not yet materialized. Additionally, the silence by the United States' oil industry on the issue is puzzling and seems

strikingly unusual considering the obvious impact new oil revenues will have on the American economy.

CONCLUSION

The United States' intervention in Somalia on humanitarian grounds may prove to be the fortuitous opportunity needed to improve America's strategic posture in Southwest Asia. Assisting in the restoration of peace and stability in Somali coupled with accepting responsibility to establish there an interim regime under American trusteeship should assure that our interests are being met. With a forward presence in Somalia, America will be in a better position to tangibly demonstrate an enhanced ability to protect its allies, defend its interests, and exert its influence in the Persian Gulf.

Regardless of the size of the base force we employ, the United States must ensure that its war-fighting forces have sufficient airlift and sealift support to rapidly and efficiently move to their respective theater designations. This would greatly facilitate U.S. preparations for the next conflict as envisioned by General Powell in his report on national military strategy: "The United States must maintain the strength necessary to influence world events, deter would-be aggressors, guarantee free access to global markets, and encourage continued democratic and economic progress in an atmosphere of enhanced stability."[31] Forward basing crucial USCENTCOM elements in Somalia, is a feasible approach to maintaining the strength required to fully satisfy these objectives in Southwest Asia.

By reducing the requirement to move large amounts of materiel to the region, a land-based presence in Somalia provides USCENTCOM the redundancy and flexibility to swiftly respond with a wide spectrum of war-fighting packages. It would also be a suitable means of augmenting U.S. maritime forces to adequately and decisively accomplish the United States' regional security strategy--with less costly consequences.

In certain cases, there appears to be increasing tolerance to intrusive violations of a nation-state's territorial integrity whereas heretofore it was denounced as an act of aggression. There are no serious political impediments to the United States playing a stronger role in Southwest Asia other than the possibility of opposition in America itself. Reactions from most Arab governments concerning an American forward presence in Somalia will probably be relatively mild. Hence, continued investment in Somalia is worth the risk even though some short-term political complications might be in the offing.

Uncertainty still lingers regarding the striking information disclosed by the *Los Angeles Times* on the prospective fortune of significant amounts of oil in northern Somalia. Interest in commercial exploitation of Somali oil, from the standpoint of America's major oil giants, has been relatively low key. If oil is verified there in commercial quantities, Somalia will immediately regain the attention of the world at large, but for altogether different reasons. And America's interest in Somalia will exponentially increase. Private corporations desirous of

exploration of the Somalia frontier could certainly aid in the extensive rebuilding, infrastructure improvements, and internal development needed to enhance Somalia's future growth and economic potential.

Our new military strategy for USCENTCOM's AOR must entail a comprehensive plan to improve the deployability and responsiveness of our combat forces to preempt an adversary's chance at a *fait accompli*. This can be accomplished by projecting major elements from the continental United States in combination with the employment of critical pre-positioned supplies and equipment based in Somalia, Kuwait, and at least one other focal point in theater. Such an arrangement would significantly enhance our military preparedness for fighting jointly, irrespective of the level of conflict, within Southwest Asia.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon our defense planners to weigh the feasibility of incorporating Somalia into our strategic plans before acceding to a complete withdrawal of USCENTCOM troops. Too often we tend to forget the long-standing Machiavellian adage: nation-states, and particularly great powers, have no permanent enemies or friends, but only permanent interests.[32] Our permanent interests in Southwest Asia may well depend upon a correct appraisal of America's bold humanitarian intervention in Somalia.

Notes

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